

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 199702
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DRAFTED BY: ARA:SWILKINSON

APPROVED BY: ARA:SWILKINSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 199702

FOR AMBASSADOR VAKY

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEGUCIGALPA 3731, ACTION SECSTATE 08 AUG:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 3731

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, HO

SUBJ: REMOVAL OF CHIEF OF STATE

1. I HAVE JUST BEEN INFORMED BY THREE COLONEL DELEGATION FROM
SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL THAT GENERAL MELGAR'S RESIGNATION AS
CHIEF OF STATE IS BEING ANNOUNCED TONIGHT.

2. JUNTA COMPOSED OF ARMED FORCES COMMANDER POLICARPO PAZ GARCIA,
AIR FORCE COMMANDER LIEUTENANT COLONEL DOMINGO ALVAREZ AND
NEW POLICE COMMANDER (FUSEP) LIEUTENANT COLONEL AMILCAR ZELAYA
WILL TAKE OVER.

3. SDC DELEGATION OF LIEUTENANT COLONELS TORRES ARIAS (G-2),
LTC BUESO (OF OFFICER'S SCHOOL), LTC BONILLA (OF LOGISTICAL
CENTER) STRESSED THAT ONLY A MAN AND NOT POLICIES ARE CHANGED.
THEY WERE INSISTENT THAT ARMED FORCES ACTED UNANIMOUSLY.
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4. SDC DELEGATION SAID THAT ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE AS STIP-
ULATED, AND WILL BE "CLEAN AND HONEST". THEY REITERATED THAT GOH
POLICIES WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED.

5. I WAS HANDED COPY OF SDC COMMUNIQUE WHICH STATES THAT PRESS
LIBERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS WILL BE RESPECTED.

6. WHEN ASKED WHY CHANGE IS TAKING PLACE, SDC DELGATION EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH MELGAR'S RESPECT FOR SDC POLICIES, IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND SOCIAL DECOMPOSITION. THEY ALSO MENTIONED CENTRAL AMERICAN CONTEXT WITHOUT OFFERING DETAILS.

7. I WAS TOLD THAT A NUMBER OF MINISTERS AND AGENCY HEADS WOULD PROBABLY RESIGN.

8. I INFORMED DELEGATION THAT USG WOULD BE SURPRISED GREATLY BY THIS DEVELOPMENT, WHICH I WOULD REPORT PROMPTLY TO MY GOVERNMENT. IT WAS CLEAR FROM THEIR PRESENTATION THAT SDC KNOWS HOW IMPORTANT THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE WILL BE TO USG. I ASKED SPECIFICALLY ABOUT ELECTIONS, FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS. THEY STATED THAT HUMAN RIGHTS WILL BE RESPECTED.

9. GENERAL MELGAR IS REPORTEDLY ACCEPTING SDC'S DECISION QUIETLY. RADIO ANNOUNCED CHANGE AT 9:30 PM TONIGHT. NO SERIOUS RESISTANCE TO CHANGE IS ANTICIPATED. CITY IS QUIET. WILL REPORT MORE FULLY TOMORROW. JARAMILLO UNQUOTE. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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